Antares™

AUTO-TUNE VOCAL COMPRESSOR

USER GUIDE

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Introducing Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor



A vocal-first compressor designed to bring your best performance forward.

Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor is an advanced dual-stage compressor for modern vocal production. Key compression styles driven by next-generation machine learning make finding the best compression settings fast and easy.

Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor is one of the few compressors in the world to support Dual-Stage configurations. Quickly dial in the perfect energy for your vocal by choosing from four of the most popular styles of compression designed to control peaks in volume or smooth out the overall performance with warm tube saturation.

Quick Start – License Activation

Activation Instructions

Before we can use Vocal Compressor, we need to activate our license first using the Auto-Tune Central application. Please follow the steps below, or watch our instructional video to get started:

Step 1: Install Auto-Tune Central

Auto-Tune Central is Antares' download manager, where you can install your plug-ins and manage their activations. If you don't have it installed on your computer yet, visit our website here to download the latest installer. After downloading, run the installer.

After installation is complete, you can find Auto-Tune Central in your computer's applications folder:

MacOS
/Applications

Windows
C:\Program Files\Antares Audio Technologies

Step 2: Open Auto-Tune Central and Log In

On the login screen in Auto-Tune Central, enter the email address and password for your Antares account.

If you purchased your plug-in license directly from our website (antarestech.com), navigate to the Plug-Ins tab to install and manage your license activations.

If your purchase was made through a third party, please follow the instructions in Step 3. Otherwise, skip to Step 4.

Step 3: Navigate to the Redeem a License Tab

In the top banner of Auto-Tune Central, select "Redeem a License." Enter your 25-digit registration code, then click **Redeem and Activate**.

Step 4. Install Your Plug-In

Click the blue **Install** button next to your license. If you have an Auto-Tune Unlimited subscription or similar plug-in bundle, you can install all of the included plug-ins with one click using the Install All button.

***Note**: If an update is available for your plug-in, the blue Install button will be replaced with a yellow **Update** button. Click the **Update** button to install the latest version of your plug-in.*

Step 5. Activate Your License

Click the blue **Activate** button. Each license can be activated on up to two locations simultaneously. You may activate your license onto a computer, a physical iLok dongle, or a combination of the two options.

See this FAQ page for more information on iLok license management.

After activating your license, you're ready to use your Antares plug-in(s) in your DAW!

Step 6: Open Vocal Compressor In Your DAW

Below, you'll find instructions on how to insert Vocal Compressor onto a track in various compatible DAWs:

Pro Tools

Choose an empty insert slot on one of your audio tracks, instrument tracks, or buses. Then select Vocal Compressor from the pop-up menu in either the Dynamics Category or Antares Manufacturer list.

Logic Pro

Choose an empty insert slot on one of your audio tracks, instrument tracks or buses and select Vocal Compressor from the pop-up menu. You will find Vocal Compressor in: *Audio Units > Antares* section (named Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor).

Ableton Live

In either Session or Arrangement View, select the track you would like to place Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor on by clicking the track name.

At the top left of Ableton's interface, click on the Plug-in Device Browser icon. From the plug-ins list, double-click Vocal Compressor, or drag it onto the track.

Cubase

Choose an empty insert slot, for example in the Mixer, and select Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor from the menu that appears.

Studio One

Click the '+' button next to the Inserts tab of an audio track, and select 'Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor' from the drop-down menu. Alternatively, drag and drop the plug-in from the Antares Effects folder.

Reaper

Click the ‘FX’ button next to the track name of an audio track, and select ‘Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor’ from the EQ or Dynamics category.

Digital Performer

In the Digital Performer Mixing Board, click an empty insert slot to open the Insert Effects list. Select Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor from the list, or use the search bar to locate it quickly.

Global Controls



Auto-Tune Central

Click on the Antares Logo to open **Auto-Tune Central**, a separate application used to manage license activations.

Undo

Click the **Undo** button to reverse your most recent edit, up to 99 steps.

Redo

Click the **Redo** button to restore the most recently undone edit.

Settings

Click the gear icon to configure your Settings and Preferences.

Bypass

Click the **Bypass** button to disable Vocal Compressor in your DAW. When bypassed, the Bypass button will appear de-illuminated.

Single/Dual Compression Toggle



Customize your vocal compression chain using the **Single Mode** and **Dual Mode** toggle.

Single Mode

Sometimes, less is more. Use Single Mode to apply one compressor to your audio at a time. The Modern Compressor, for example, is best used for problem-solving while in this mode.

Dual Mode

Use Dual Mode to stack two compressors together in any order to create your ultimate vocal compression chain.

Preset Manager

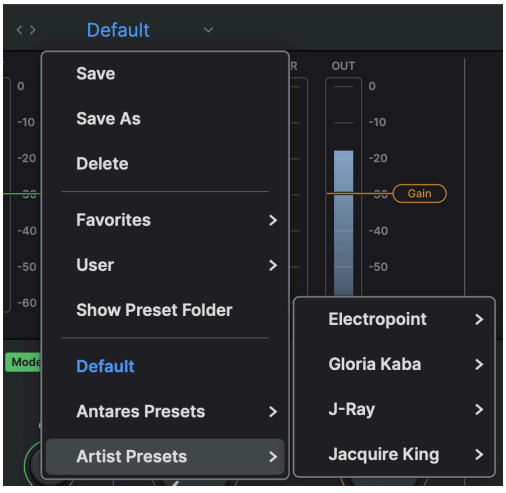


Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor features a collection of artist presets, and a method for saving your own custom presets within the **Preset Manager**.

Use the left and right arrow buttons to load presets in order. This is helpful for testing presets sequentially without navigating to the preset dropdown menu every time.

Preset Dropdown Menu

The preset dropdown menu lists all of the presets available in Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor, along with options to Save, Save As, or Delete presets.



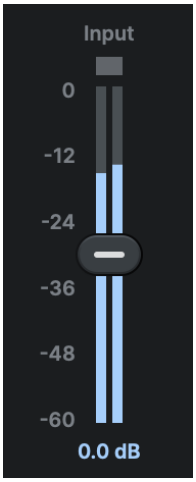
Click the thumbs up icon next to a preset name to add that preset to the *Favorites* folder.

Custom Presets are listed in the *User* folder, and are located higher in the preset dropdown menu for easy access.

The **Antares Presets** and the **Artist Presets** offer a selection of problem-solving and creative effects possible with Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor.

Click **Show Preset Folder** to go to the specific directory where all Vocal Compressor presets are saved on your computer. This is helpful for managing the list of presets.

Input Gain

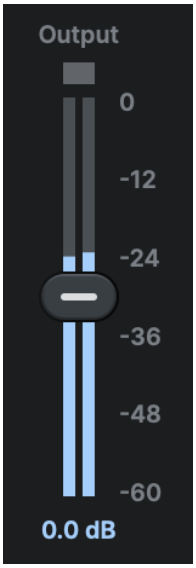


The global **Input Gain** meter displays the incoming gain level of your audio in real time. Click and drag the fader to adjust the gain level of the input audio before it is processed by Vocal Compressor.

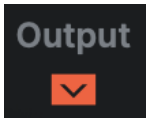


If your audio starts clipping, a red indicator light will appear above the meter. Click on it to clear the clipping notification.

Output Gain



The global **Output Gain** meter displays the outgoing gain level of your audio in realtime. Click and drag the fader to manually adjust the gain level of the audio after it has been processed by Vocal Compressor.

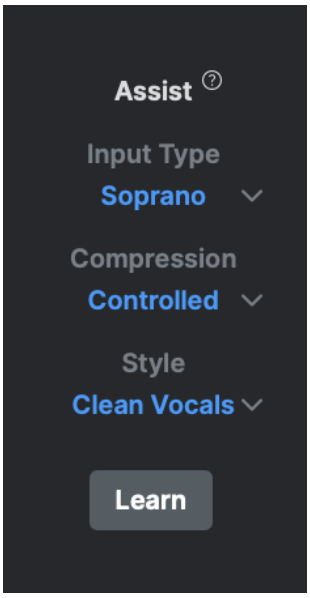


If your audio starts clipping, a red indicator light will appear above the meter. Click on it to clear the clipping notification.

Assist

The **Assist** tool uses machine learning to determine the best starting compression settings for your vocal. Select your desired compression amount and vocal style, press Learn, then start playback.

After five seconds of listening, the results will be presented for you to accept and apply to the Vocal Compressor.



Input Type

The **Input Type** allows the Vocal Compressor to identify your audio with more accuracy, suggest more helpful compression settings, and improve accuracy for the Auto-Tune Pitch Filter. Your options are:

- **Soprano**
- **Alto-Tenor**
- **Low Male**
- **Instrument**
- **Bass Inst**

The Input Type will be determined automatically after using the Assist function, but you may also select an Input Type manually.

Compression

The **Compression** section determines the total amount of compression applied to your vocal. Select your desired amount of compression from the following dropdown menu options:

- **Minimal**: Apply 0 to -3 decibels of gain reduction.
- **Controlled**: Apply -3 to -6 decibels of gain reduction.
- **Aggressive**: Apply -8 to -12 decibels of gain reduction.

Style

Style determines the amount of analog saturation to add to your vocal. The dropdown menu contains the following options:

- **Clean Vocals**: All saturation disabled for vocal transparent vocal compression.
- **Warm & Full**: Medium amount of saturation added for a warm, balanced sound.
- **Gritty Vocal**: Maximum saturation enabled at every stage for an analog, energetic sound.

Learn

After setting your preferred input type, compression amount, and style, click the **Learn** button and start playback in your DAW to begin the Assist process.

The Assist function will then listen to five seconds of audio playback, and the Vocal Compressor will suggest the best starting compression settings for your vocal.

You can accept the settings as-is via the pop-up shown below, then tweak them as desired.

For the most accurate Assist results, select a dynamic section of the vocal to play back. If the results are not what you expected, try a different Compression amount or Style setting and try again with a new section of the vocal performance.



FET Compressor



Based on the most popular **FET Compressor**, this fast-attacking compressor is known for being snappy with transient signals, such as those generated by vocals and percussive sounds.

The FET Compressor is best used for taming peaks in the first stage of a serial compression setup.

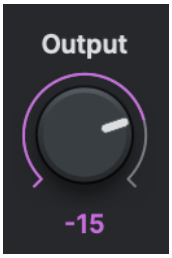
Input



Use the **Input** knob to adjust the gain level in dB of the signal entering the compressor.

Similar to the behavior of FET hardware compressors, the higher the input gain, the more signal will hit the compressor. This leads to greater gain reduction and more saturation warmth (when Warm is enabled.)

Output



The **Output** knob adjusts the outgoing gain in dB after the signal is compressed.

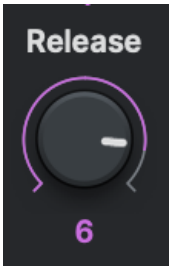
Attack



The **Attack** knob controls the speed at which the compressor reacts to the signal.

A fast attack speed helps add body to the audio, and tames sharp transients. Slower attack speeds are great for adding punch.

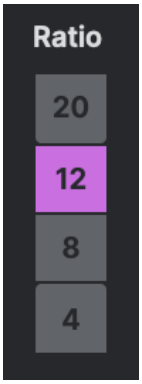
Release



The **Release** knob controls the speed at which the compressor "lets go" of the signal after compressing it.

Fast release times help to tame sharp transients, while slow release times are great for smoothing out dynamic performances.

Ratio



The **Ratio** determines how much the signal is compressed after it surpasses the threshold.

- **Low (4:1)**: Applies subtle compression while also preserving the natural peaks and valleys of a signal. Note that lower ratios will apply less gain reduction, and will have a softer knee.
- **Medium (8:1)**: Gives you tighter control over transients without causing noticeable changes to tone and punch. You may also notice a sound that's fuller and louder, due to the harder knee.
- **Heavy (12:1)**: Creates a more processed, aggressive sound - works best for extreme tone shaping and dynamic control. Be careful not to lose the signal's punch, clarity, and presence.
- **Limiting (20:1)**: Prevents the signal from exceeding a digital ceiling, reduces dynamic range, and increases the perceived loudness of a signal. Note that limiting may result in loss of detail and punch as well as introduce digital distortion/clipping.

Warm



Click the **Warm** button to add an amount of “analog warmth” to the signal by enabling a unique saturation modeled after FET transformers.

The amount of warmth added to the signal is determined by the level of the input signal.

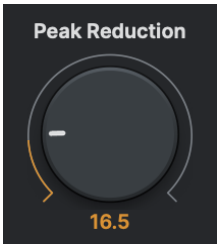
Opto A Compressor



The **Opto A Compressor** emulates a classic tube compressor known for its slow and warm sound.

This compression style is best used in the second stage of a serial compression setup.

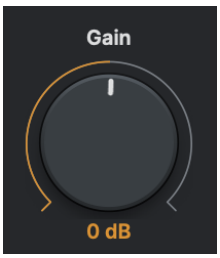
Peak Reduction



The **Peak Reduction** knob is an intelligent “one-stop-shop” for adding smooth compression to the signal with a single knob.

This knob simultaneously adjusts the ratio, attack, release, and threshold of the compressor.

Gain



The **Gain** knob adjusts outgoing gain after the signal is compressed.

Typically, the gain knob on a compressor is used to bring the peaks of the compressed signal back up to the same level as they were pre-compression, thereby maintaining the same peak level while raising the overall level.

Warm



Click the **Warm** button to add classic tube saturation to the signal, then adjust the amount using the knob that appears above it.

Tube saturation is a type of gentle distortion that adds subtle harmonic distortion to a signal, giving it a warm, full sound quality.

Opto B Compressor



The **Opto B Compressor** emulates a widely used Opto compressor for vocals, known for its slow “Opto-style” attack and signature tube warmth.

This compression style can be used in either the first or second stage of a serial compression setup.

Threshold



The **Threshold** determines the level at which the signal engages the compressor.

If you set the threshold level to -10 dB, for example, only signal peaks over that level will be compressed.

Ratio



Use the **Ratio** knob to determine how much the signal is compressed after it surpasses the threshold.

The ratio should be adjusted alongside the threshold to balance the amount of compression applied with how aggressively it affects the signal.

Attack



The **Attack** knob controls the speed at which the compressor reacts to the signal.

A fast attack speed helps add body to the audio, and tames sharp transients. Slower attack speeds are great for adding punch.

Release



The **Release** knob controls the speed (in milliseconds) at which the compressor 'lets go' of the signal after compressing it.

Fast release times help to tame sharp transients, while slow release times are great for smoothing out dynamic performances.

Gain



The **Gain** knob adjusts the signal's outgoing gain after it has compressed.

Typically, the gain knob on a compressor is used to bring the peaks of the compressed signal back up to the same level as they were pre-compression, thereby maintaining the same peak level while raising the overall level.

Warm



Click the **Warm** button to add an amount of "analog warmth" to the signal by enabling a unique saturation modeled after FET transformers.

The amount of warmth added to the signal is determined by the level of the input signal.

Modern Compressor



The **Modern Compressor** adds no color or warmth to the signal, making it great for transparent problem-solving. This compressor contains a wider collection of utility features, such as the Auto-Tune Pitch Filter and Side Chain controls.

The Modern Compressor is best used for problem solving while in Single Mode.

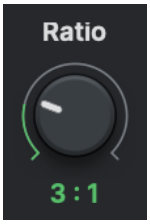
Threshold



The **Threshold** determines the level at which the signal engages the compressor.

If you set the threshold level to -18 dB, for example, only signal peaks over that level will be compressed.

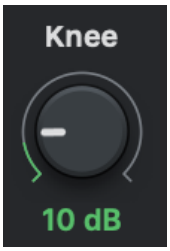
Ratio



The **Ratio** determines how much the signal is compressed after it surpasses the threshold.

The ratio knob should be adjusted alongside the threshold to balance the amount of compression applied with how aggressively it affects the signal.

Knee



Use the **Knee** knob to control how rapidly the audio is compressed after surpassing the threshold level.

A “soft” knee (higher dB value) results in a more gradual transition than a “hard” knee (lower dB value).

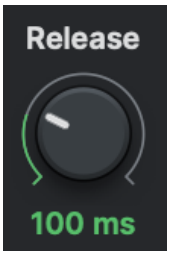
Attack



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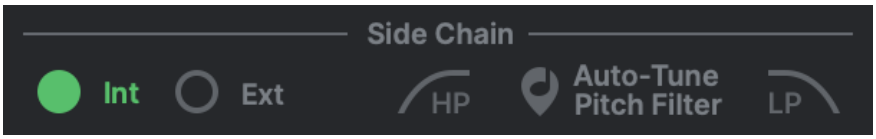
Gain



The **Gain** knob adjusts outgoing gain after the signal is compressed.

Typically, the gain knob on a compressor is used to bring the peaks of the compressed signal back up to the same level as they were pre-compression, thereby maintaining the same peak level while raising the overall level.

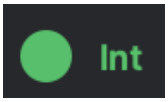
Side Chain Controls



The **Side Chain Controls** are unique to the Modern Compressor. In side chain compression, the level of one instrument or sound triggers the compressor to control the level of another sound.

Side chaining is a common technique used with compressors to create more space, rhythm, or add energy to a mix.

Internal



Select the **Internal** side chain option (most common) to take advantage of the High Pass and Low Pass filters for the incoming signal.

For example, if you're compressing an entire drum set, and the kick drum triggers the compressor when you don't want it to, you can use the internal side chain to ignore the kick drum's low frequencies.

External



Select the **External** side chain filter to use a separate signal to control the compressor. The specifics for implementing an external side chain vary from DAW to DAW, so please refer to your DAW's documentation.

A common usage of external side chaining is seen in EDM, where the compression level on a bass is controlled by the output of a kick drum. When the kick drum is played, the bass gets compressed so the kick can cut through the mix.

Auto-Tune Pitch Filter



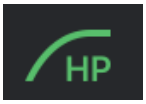
When the **Auto-Tune Pitch Filter** is enabled, the side chain filters will automatically track and follow the fundamental pitch of the vocals.

This feature uses pitch detection to filter out all frequencies around the singer's fundamental pitch. When enabled, the compressor will only react to the sonic information around the singer's fundamental pitch, leading to a more musical and subtle vocal compression. Since it automatically detects and reacts to a single pitch at a time, the Auto-Tune Pitch Filter works best on vocals and other monophonic audio sources.

The Auto-Tune Pitch Filter can also be used during live performances to reduce the amount that the Vocal Compressor reacts to incoming microphone bleed.

***Note**: Click on the icon to the left of the Auto-Tune Pitch Filter label to toggle it On/Off.*

High Pass Filter



Enable the **High Pass Filter** to ignore high frequencies, which are cut off at 7.5 kHZ at a 24 dB/Oct slope.

***Note**: Only available when the Auto-Tune Pitch Filter is disabled.*

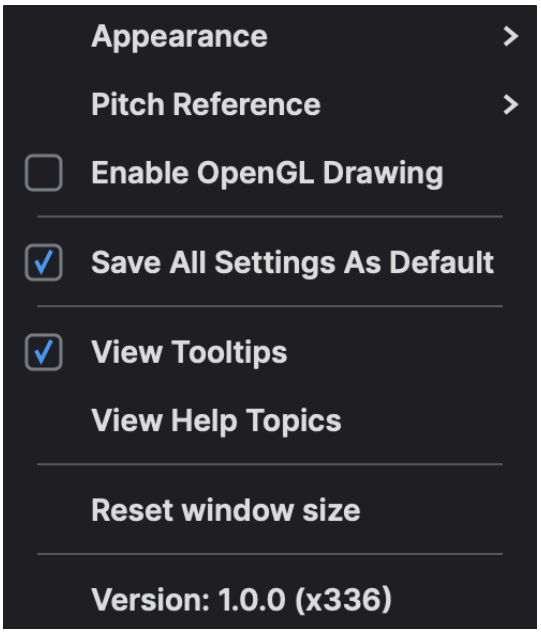
Low Pass Filter



Enable the **Low Pass Filter** to ignore low frequencies, which are cut off at 100 hz at a 24 dB/Oct slope.

***Note**: Only available when the Auto-Tune Pitch Filter is disabled.*

Settings and Preferences



The **Settings and Preferences** menu allows you to customize your overall experience with Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor.

Appearance

Appearance determines the theme of the Vocal Compressor GUI. Options include:

- Light
- Dark
- System

If 'System' is selected, Vocal Compressor will follow the appearance settings of your Mac or PC.

Pitch Reference

The **Pitch Reference** setting lets you choose which of the stereo channels will be used to analyze the pitch for the Auto-Tune Pitch Filter.

If one channel is cleaner or better isolated than the other, select that channel as the pitch reference.

When using Vocal Compressor on a stereo track, both channels should feature the same source material (e.g. a single vocal performance, recorded in stereo using two microphones).

Enable OpenGL Drawing

Vocal Compressor uses **OpenGL** for improved graphics on computers with compatible graphics card hardware.

To improve performance, OpenGL is *disabled* by default on Mac. On Windows, OpenGL is *enabled* by default.

OpenGL can be toggled On/Off on either platform at any time.

Save All Settings As Default

Enable this setting to apply your setting preferences as default for all instances of Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor.

View Tooltips

Click to enable **Tooltips**.

When this setting is enabled, hover over any parameter in the user interface to read a short description of the control.

View Help Topics

Click to open the Auto-Tune Vocal Compressor Help Page in your web browser.

This article contains tutorial videos, answers frequently asked questions, and will direct you to other relevant articles in the Antares Knowledge Base.

Reset Window Size

The Vocal Compressor plug-in window is completely resizable, and stays sharp at any size. Click and drag the plug-in window to resize it to your liking.

Use this setting to reset the window size back to its default size.